

# THE ELEMENTARY ENGLISH REVIEW

VOL. XIV

DECEMBER 1937

No. 8

## The Great Adventure

RUTH C. SCHOONOVER

*Public Schools, Negaunee, Michigan*

JEAN HENRI FABRE relates in one of his exceedingly interesting chapters on the life of the spider how the young of the Banded Empira get their start in the world. The mother spider, from the tiny spinnerets secreted in her abdomen, spins a pouch in which to lay her eggs. The pouch is fastened beneath a twig at the foot of a rose bush where the July heat soon hatches some six hundred infinitesimal pin points of young spiders. The babies set out at once on their journey through life by climbing the stalks of the rose bush aided by the secretions of the silk mills or spinnerets in their abdomens. At length, after reaching the top of the rose bush, a platform consisting of interwoven strands of silk is made and the spiders enter for a time upon some mysterious work of preparation. Then—like witches on broomsticks—they serenely depart from the platform apparently floating on nothing in the summer air. Through microscopic observation, the discovery was made that invisible filaments of silk were paid out to the breeze by each tiny spider until they were buoyant enough for support, when each little creature embarked, airship-fashion, upon life.

Like the preparation of these tiny spiders for the great adventure, are the reading experiences of the child. In the first

grade, while he is learning the simple mechanics of reading, and while his vocabulary is increasing at its maximum rate, he is merely gaining a point of vantage, placing himself in a position from which he will set sail, at first falteringly and hesitatingly, then more confidently; finally with gay and joyous abandon, as, with an ever increasing radius of the gossamer thread, he ranges far and wide over the literary fields of childhood, adolescence, and maturity.

For a time the fancy of the young child finds expression in imitating the reading of his elders, as, with exaggerated earnestness and fortissimo voice, extemporizing as he goes, he pretends to read a book or newspaper which is as likely to be inverted as right side up. In this age of make believe, Mother Goose, Nursery Rhymes, tales of fairies, brownies, and hobgoblins, then tall tales as Jack and the Beanstalk, and Jack, the Giant Killer, thrill his emotions and stir his imagination. Although he is usually told that these are not really true stories, his enjoyment of them is unrestrained and undiminished until he learns the truth about Santa Claus. Then he enters upon a period in which he is inclined to be a little more skeptical and discriminating. As his taste for the fantastic is gradually modified and conditioned by a growing desire for reality he

progresses through the animal stories, fables by Andersen and Grimm, and stories of Baron Munchausen to hero tales, legends, folk lore, and nature lore.

In the crusader, or gang-and-pigtail age, stories of adventure, travel, achievement, loyalty, and idealism have their appeal. Series books circulate rapidly among friends. The girl seeks social approval, so necessary to the growing personality, as a potential missionary or as a leader in some great humanitarian service, the boy as an arm of the law or as a knight in shining armor,—the avenger of human wrongs.

With the coming of adolescence, the blossoming of the creative instinct is manifested in altered reading tastes which demand for their satisfaction books and magazines describing how to build or construct, how to make use of the tools of various occupations, how to adapt science and invention to projects of their own devising or to the work of the home. Books and magazines on aeroplanes, photography, athletics, camping, woodcraft, pioneering and on almost every conceivable topic that has to do with self expression or recreation are devoured by both boys and girls during this voracious period. Then, too, come the stories of glamorous romance, mystery and detective stories, and stories of crude adventure, and sanguinary fighting. The boy surreptitiously reads the forbidden dime novel, not because of any inherent criminal tendency, but in order that he may experience vicariously the thrill of living with Jesse James, or the Dalton gang in their lawless adventures.

During the later years of adolescence, when youth begins to think more seriously of choosing a vocation and a mate, there is increased interest in truth and actuality, in knowing more about people, human relations, occupations and industry. Books and magazines on careers, biography, travel, science and invention, ethics and

conduct attract and hold the attention. Stories read at this age must be more sophisticated than the stories of any previous age. No more Victorian literature with its swooning heroines will do. Their heroines must be ultra-modern. In their eagerness to be acknowledged as adults, these young people are over-hasty in putting away childish things. Any reading material which could possibly be labeled "juvenile" is rejected with disdain.

Maturity, insistent upon reality or seeking escape from it, ranges extensively over the entire literary field. Mystery stories, biography, romance, history, drama, poetry, science, invention, politics, psychology, religion, philosophy, all are sampled at random, tasted and rejected, or feasted upon as time and opportunity permit.

In observing the growth to maturity and the dispersion of the family of young spiders, it was disclosed that the development of some individuals appeared to be checked at comparatively early stages and that these individuals remained close to their birthplace, while the larger and stronger members of the family scattered over a wide area.

Like these unfortunate specimens who failed to reach full and vigorous maturity, are many human beings whose reading development is arrested at one of the intermediate stages. Restricted in quantity and narrowly circumscribed in content, the reading of these individuals with dwarfed literary appreciation, is confined to trashy romance, lurid sex novels, detective, mystery, and adventure stories, a large percentage of which contain the same old plots and time worn situations that have been literally ripped and turned and sponged and rebuilt by hack writers working on a production basis.

Obviously such reading is indicative, not so much of an individual's intelligence or education as of the state of his emotional development. It not infre-

quently occurs that those who are voracious readers of this type of literature, actually re-enact some of the scenes which are depicted and run afoul of the law. Eager to find an alibi or to secure clemency, they blame their reading for their unfortunate plight. The authorities are quite readily inclined to accept these statements at their face value, completely overlooking the fact that such individuals are potential problems in crime and licentiousness anyway, and that their reading is really a symptom rather than the cause of their wrong-doing. Because of their emotional immaturity, their conduct was dictated by flights of fancy, unchecked by reason and judgment. Their inhibitions, weak from the beginning, could not hold in check the accentuated impulses resulting from the stimulus of this kind of reading, and rash, unreasoned conduct resulted. Another individual, more mature emotionally, might occasionally sample such reading, but his conduct would be unaffected by it because of his greater ability to dissociate the real from the unreal.

Another class, all too large in number, may be designated as the literate non-readers. These are the adults who read only occasional fragments from the newspaper, but seldom, if ever, read a book or a magazine article. They are not emotionally immature, unintelligent or unschooled, but for them reading is such a slow, laborious process that they get little or no satisfaction from it. Usually it will be found that such an individual learned to read by the synthetic method, that his eye-span is short and his vocabulary limited. As a result, the literary taste and appreciation of these individuals is dormant or practically non-existent.

Apparently, then, we may draw the following conclusions regarding voluntary reading and the development of taste and appreciation in literature:

1. That the literary tastes and appreci-

ations of an individual normally progress from infancy to maturity through approximately the changes which have been described.

2. That there are occasional individuals, the arrested development of whose tastes and appreciations at some intermediate stage, frequently bears some definite relation to an arrested emotional development.

3. That there is in this country at the present time a comparatively high percentage of literate non-readers, not including men and women of foreign birth, who originally learned to read in another language.

Not only have teachers regarded it as pedagogically sound practice to compel pupils to perform tasks which were distasteful, but also to forbid many legitimate activities which gave them too much enjoyment. One of the most frowned upon of these activities, was recreational reading. With some exceptions, teachers have quite generally overlooked the value of inculcating the reading habit in their pupils, even to the point of actually discouraging it in order that this reading might not interfere with their other studies. While it is easily conceivable that some pupils would not wisely distribute their time between study and recreational reading, this is a problem which should not be very difficult for the educator who has learned the art of teaching without quenching. The teacher who deplores the enthusiasm of pupils for recreational reading, who fails to encourage it or to recognize its value as training for the wise use of leisure time, and who attempts to abolish it as an evil, may appropriately be caricatured as tilting at windmills. Fortunately, teachers of this species are rapidly diminishing in number, though they are by no means uncommon.

Because of changes in educational psychology, in methods of teaching reading, and in the attractiveness of reading ma-

terial which is now placed before children, we may predict with certainty that progressively fewer children will form definite prejudices against books and that the proportion of literate non-readers will decrease considerably within the next decade.

What principles should guide the parent, teacher, or librarian who wishes to assist the child in his search for "the magic key to the literary wonderlands"? What precautions must be observed if one is to avoid spoiling this charming adventure, robbing it of its savor? The observations of several students follow:

1. Since attitude is of such importance in habit formation (Thorndike), it is useless to attempt to force children to read that which they dislike.

2. A child likes a book because something in its contents or viewpoint is at his level and appeals to his instinctive desires.

3. Taste cannot be developed by forcing the reading of books of superior quality at once. We must begin with the material already in the child's mind.

4. If a boy or girl loves reading, literary tastes can be cultivated and better books will take the place of cheap ones, whereas, if there is no love for reading, it is hard to arouse interest in books after one has grown up without them.

5. Growth in appreciation, which is subtle and gradual, can be stimulated through the use of a variety of reading materials. As experience in selection increases, taste becomes surer and surer. The maturing of literary taste is as inevitable as the maturing of physique.

Concerning children's interest in reading, several significant observations have been made.

Gates emphasizes the statement that there is a definite correlation between interest in reading and such literary characteristics as liveliness, conversation, plot, animalness, humor, and surprise.

Johnson also made an investigation to

determine what difference, if any, exists in boys' and girls' tastes in reading. He states, "Girls read more books, boys read more magazines and newspapers."

Terman and Lima, in their study, infer that such individual differences as sex, age, and interest wield a great influence upon children's reading.

Dolch emphasizes the inference made by these authors and expands it by including intelligence as the strongest single factor which affects enjoyment of reading. Walpole agrees with this in the statement, "If a reader has a fine mind, he will, very early in his reading history, perceive the essential differences between books."

Contradictory as are the findings in some respects of these investigations, those who have the largest number of case studies and who have gone into the subject most thoroughly, appear to be pretty generally agreed on certain fundamentals which may be listed as follows:

1. That the intellectual curiosity of the child, which all possess to a certain degree, finds a natural means of gratification in reading.

2. That the child who finds reading a pleasurable experience tends to increase the amount of his reading, and reads a greater variety of material.

3. That the school really determines whether the child's reading is to be a pleasurable experience, or otherwise.

4. That, with a certain percentage of pupils, mere exposure to good books is all that is needed, while others, probably a majority, need further stimulation in order to become good readers.

5. That wide and varied reading usually results in greater selectivity, tending toward the choice of better literature.

6. That children re-read their favorite books with much the same enjoyment as that which they experience in singing their favorite songs.

7. That, as an individual matures, his literary taste also normally undergoes



changes which tend toward more mature reading matter and better literature.

The well-integrated reading program, which was established in 1924-25 for grades one to six inclusive of the Negaunee Public Schools demonstrates the operation of these fundamentals in virtually every respect. The plan is based upon the theory formulated by Gray and Munroe, that the child, if given the "magic key" to the gateway of the literary wonderlands in early childhood will eventually develop a taste and appreciation for literature of real worth.

In each of these grades will be found an extensive room library of some one hundred attractively bound and printed books. The books were selected partly by the teachers and supervisors, partly by the children themselves. Of the books available, it has been accurately determined that in the first three grades practically every child reads every book listed for his grade each year. In grades four, five, and six, from 80 per cent to 90 per cent of the pupils read the entire list and none read less than half of the list each year.

Young children who have a fairly good mastery of the mechanics of reading especially delight in attractive books suited to their age and grade. They will read many such books voluntarily with no incentives other than curiosity, interest, and the desire to explore.

It is mandatory that the schools equip pupils to distinguish between the genuine and the spurious in the reading matter which they must encounter in their out-of-school environment. Today, children are feasting upon an unwholesome diet of stories which deal with torturing, killing, kidnaping, upon hair-raising adventures, debasing vulgarity, and cheap wit. The paper-covered dime novels of a generation ago were uplifting in comparison with some of this trash. The "Big Little Books," the successor to the dime novels of a former day, furnish a diet of lurid

melodrama, told chiefly by pictures, of brutal men doing brutal deeds, and stories of wild, extravagant adventure.

In summarizing, the following observations should be recognized in establishing a vital recreational reading program for children:

1. Reading is a natural interest. Pupils seem to take to it readily and with enthusiasm if it is not made to appear too much like a school assignment.

2. By providing psychologically sound incentives other than coercion, rewards, exemptions, and school marks, it is possible to insure practically a one hundred per cent participation in an extensive reading program.

3. Pupil endorsement of books worth reading should be given primary consideration if a reading environment which is stimulating for all pupils is to endure.

4. If the school provides a comprehensive reading program plus a sufficient amount of wholesome and attractive reading material adapted to each stage of their development, it will have rendered one of the most valuable services a school is capable of rendering to its pupils.

"If at just the right moment we present to the child just the right food for his curiosity and eagerness—folk-lore, fairy-tale, and fable, song, science, adventure, handcrafts and games, each when the appropriate faculty is unfolding—then we can keep him curious and eager all through his childhood. Nothing better can happen to a child!

"If on the contrary, we provide insufficient reading matter, we starve clamorous faculties. If we provide the wrong books, the child can't digest them and his appetite for reading may be quickly ruined. But if we follow the now available expert advice on the care and feeding of the child's mind, we shall find that the average youngster is as well able as an adult to consume 'a book a week,' and we shall find that he thrives on the diet."

# The 3-B's Write Fairy Tales

## An Experiment with Literature and Composition

SADIE GOLDSMITH

*Chairman, Research Committee, Mental Hygiene Section  
The New York Society for the Experimental Study of Education*

THIS PAPER is an attempt to tell something of a three years' endeavor to raise the level of teaching of composition, reading, and literature in a 3-B class from the humdrum plane of imitativeness, monotony, and barren conformity to directions to a place where vital creative activity, enlisting the child's full self, came into active being.

Most of the children in the class were apparently of average intelligence—some were brighter than others; a few duller. Their home environment was decidedly below the average, economically, hygienically, and socially. Their parents were immigrants, and in many of the homes a foreign language was the medium of speech. Few, if any of the homes were influences toward the cultivation of good habits of reading and conversation.

The children's class work left a great deal to be desired. They read words, merely, rather than ideas and sentiments, and it followed that their compositions lacked vitality. Perhaps, though the teacher, a less rigid adherence to the syllabus and the class program might result in a more stimulating school environment, which, in turn, might lead to a fostering of creative activity. There was no sudden break with the old procedure, no set scheme, but rather the consciousness of a goal to be striven for and the general concept of a method for achieving it.

Accordingly, one day during the composition and literature period, the teacher read a fairy story aloud. The children listened quietly. The reading of fairy

stories continued for about two weeks; the tales were chosen for their suitability to the age and interests of the children.

Then the children suggested that they be allowed to dramatize some of the stories, offering to reproduce those they liked and remembered best.

Little by little it became customary for the children to bring their favorite stories to class, and to read them to the group. After a while the children began to discuss these stories among themselves—spontaneously, intelligently, and appreciatively. They commented on the plot and actions of the characters. They showed an increasing readiness to discuss their literary dislikes and preferences. One of them remarked, "The words are full of pictures."

Then one day the teacher found a note on her desk. It contained a request that she read an original fairy story, written by one of the children. This was one of the things for which she had hoped. After class she called the child, and told him that she would accept his story. Later, she read it to the class.

The children were charmed and delighted with the idea of writing stories themselves—a proposal they themselves, unurged, had suggested.

Out of this writing of stories arose discussions concerning the art of story-writing, as it might be termed by grown-ups. Such problems as characters and characterization, suitable language, dialogue, description, and the length of a story, were thrashed out in detail.

More stories continued to drift into the teacher's letter-box. The best of them were accepted and read to the class; the others were returned to their authors with suggestions for improvement. Selections were made on the basis of a story's originality and freshness of conception, its clearness of expression and form.

It is interesting to note that the best work was not always submitted by the children ordinarily regarded as brightest. From time to time, children usually classed as dull would produce amazingly good compositions.

The urge to write stories seemed to crystallize spontaneously; it was unnecessary to "make" the children write; indeed, in the majority of instances any attempts at forcing would have resulted in dull, labored efforts. An environment was fostered that was free and sincere, intended to heighten the stimulus to creative effort and to guide the impulse along educationally fruitful lines. Endeavors were made to impress the children with the necessity of putting down only what was real and beautiful to them; in other words, the importance of being themselves. They were encouraged to write what they really felt and not what they thought was expected of them.

The classroom was decorated with appealing pictures, and appropriate books were made available. An effort was made, by means of the socialized recitation, to create in the children's minds a concept of the group as a whole, a feeling for the taste of the group, a group urge to creativeness; in short, to form a little society anticipating with eagerness and appreciation, yet with discrimination and appraisal, the contributions of its individual members. The effects of early discouragement were softened, when necessary, by urging the child to continue his creative efforts even after a number of failures.

The aims of this work were threefold;

to develop: (1) the children's powers of creative writing; (2) an appreciation of beauty of language, words, images, and rhythms; and (3) desirable social traits such as appreciation of and respect for the ideas, tastes, and efforts of others.

A few of the stories written by the children, and presented here, will give some idea of the degree of attainment of the first two goals. No concrete evidence can be adduced to show what measure of success was reached in attaining the third goal. The teacher's classroom experience, however, lends color to the belief that the children's development in the social traits of personality in the course of the experiment was marked.

The teacher herself gained from the experiment, not merely valued experience, but a widening of her horizon, which has included an ever-growing freedom from the monotony of the trivial language and dull, uninspired composition work which has so often the effect of making the grade teacher's lot an exceptionally hard one to bear.

A number of the stories<sup>1</sup> composed by the members of the 3-B class follow. Some of the work, of course, is crude, but much of it gives evidence of imaginative power which, it is not unreasonable to hope, may grow richer as the years go by, and add to it a wider vision of life and a better knowledge of language and usage, to result in literary power.

#### THE RUNAWAY SLED

There was once a boy who had a nice little sled. One day while the boy was playing, the sled went right into a pole. The boy had a little bump so he kicked the sled and hurt it very much.

That night the sled ran away. As it was going down the hill, he heard someone crying. He stopped and looked all around. At last he spied a little kitten that was nearly frozen in the snow. The sled said to the kitten, "Why don't you go to your mistress?"

<sup>1</sup> Spelling and punctuation in the children's stories have been made to conform to regular usage.

The kitten said that her mistress was very cruel to her, and that she pulled her tail all the time. She also told him that her mistress tickled her nose with a piece of string when she was sleeping, so she had made up her mind to run away.

The sled told the kitten to get on his back, and then they both rode down the hill. As they were riding they heard something, and this is what they heard, "Choo-choo-choo-choo." They looked all around and what do you think they saw?

This is what they saw—a little choo-choo train that was nearly covered with snow. The train said, "I am running away from my master because he leaves me out in the snow."

When the sled heard this he also told him to get on his back. Then the three of them rode down the hill till they came to a little house. In this house lived a little boy who always took good care of his toys. The sled called to the boy, and he came out of his house.

When he saw the sled he asked him what was the matter. The sled told him everything about all three of them. Then the boy asked him to stay with him and be his toys. The sled said, "I will if you do not kick me."

The kitten said, "I will if you do not pull my tail."

The choo-choo train said, "I will if you do not leave me out in the snow."

The boy promised that he would not do those bad things. Then, and ever since then, the sled, the kitten, and the choo-choo train have been very happy with their new master.

—*Sylvie Emanuel.*

#### WINTER

It was the last day of Autumn. The leaves were falling off the trees. The flowers had gone to sleep. The pussywillow said, "I wish that Winter would hurry."

"Yes, so do I," whispered the Maple as his leaves were falling off his branches. "I also hope that this will be a short winter."

Winter came. The pussywillow and the maple went to sleep. Winter covered them with his thick heavy blanket. The maple and the pussywillow snuggled happily under their blanket. Then soon Spring came and she whispered to the two friends and woke them up. She gave the pussywillow back his little fur paws and gave the maple back her big green leaves and her sweet sugar that all children like. Once more the two friends lived through the long peaceful summer hours talking together and waiting for Winter to come again. —*Octave Haentgens.*

#### THE MOON AND THE SUN AND THE CLOUDS

One night when the moon was shining brightly and all the stars were out, a little Indian boy who was trying to shoot his bow and arrow shot so high that it reached the moon and shot her in the eye. Right away the moon was blind.

When it was morning the moon did not know it and when the sun came out, they began to fight. The sun said, "I belong here today."

"You don't," said the moon. "It is only twelve o'clock midnight."

"How dare you say that?" said the sun. "It is daytime. It is twelve o'clock noon."

At last the clouds came along. They said, "You are both wrong. It is only nine o'clock in the morning, and I am here."

—*Julia Sztyk.*

These examples of original composition demonstrate something of the delight and the unaffectedness with which children who have been properly encouraged may take up the tasks of authorship. The outstanding discovery of this experiment has been the evidence of literary promise and ability shown by it, gifts too often hidden away because of a child's reticence, or lack of encouragement on the part of his elders. The fanciful child will gladly reveal his story-telling abilities when he is led to feel that he is doing something worth while, something that will be given a respectful hearing.

The experiment also served to stress the conviction that insofar as children are driven by an urge to self-expression, it will be freer and more meaningful if it is allied with a subject enlisting their whole-hearted interest. The results of the experiment indicate that the vocabulary requirements set by the New York City syllabus for 3-B composition are arbitrary and, in most instances, far below the children's capacities. Creative expression took the children far beyond the vocabulary requirements assigned by the syllabus.

This experiment in creative writing produced such valuable by-products as the organization of a reading club and the collection of a class library.



A brief summary of the gains (for teacher and children) and of the conclusions arising from the experiment follows:

I. Values for the Teacher.

- A. Greater acquaintance with the child.
  - 1. Environment.
  - 2. Acquaintance and reactions to life situations.
  - 3. Personal, social and esthetic abilities.
- B. Act of teaching becomes more meaningful and interesting.
  - 1. Subject matter more interesting.
  - 2. Group spirit in which the teacher shares.
  - 3. Realization that her teaching is creative and expresses itself in the literary creativeness of the children.

II. Values to the Children.

- A. Growth in individuality.
  - 1. Child's growth in ability to think and to judge independently.
  - 2. Feeling of power and creativeness.
  - 3. Imaginativeness.
- B. Growth in social traits.
  - 1. Desire and ability to share with and communicate to a group their enjoyment and appreciation.
  - 2. Desire and capacity to create in a social context.
  - 3. Ability to criticize fairly but honestly the work of others.
  - 4. Poise in delivery.
- C. Literary growth.
  - 1. Linguistic—increase in vocabulary; mastery of technique of writing and speaking and discussion.
  - 2. Appreciative—widening of range of and growth of taste.
  - 3. Creative—growth in impulse and capacity to do creative writing.

III. Improvement in School Morale.

- A. Introduction of group spirit and interests.
- B. Enlisting teacher's interests in experimentation.
- C. "Leading-on-ness" to other classroom activities, such as arts and crafts and extracurricular activities.

The results that may be achieved through the use of the fairy story as a basis for creative writing should be carefully presented to the teaching staff and to the home, and provision should be made for the recognition and fostering of the children's creative abilities. Parents

and teachers from other schools may be invited to visit the schools and examine the children's work; interclass visiting should be of particular value, and displays and exhibits may be easily arranged.

In short, the teacher, with the co-operation of the principal, should aim toward the making of an appreciative audience, who will not only be able and eager to evaluate creative work, but who will also aid in bringing it near perfection.

LIST OF FAIRY TALES USED

Beauty and the Beast  
 Bluebeard  
 The Husband Who Kept House  
 The Emperor's New Clothes  
 The Little Match Girl  
 The Ugly Duckling  
 The Darning Needle  
 Diamonds and Toads  
 Dick Whittington  
 Aladdin and His Wonderful Lamp  
 The Selfish Giant  
 Forty Thieves  
 Sinbad, the Sailor  
 Pandora's Box  
 Why the Sea Is Salt  
 Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs  
 Tom Thumb  
 How the Elephant Got His Trunk  
 One Eye, Two Eyes, Three Eyes  
 The Happy Prince  
 Puss-in-Boots  
 How the Camel Got His Hump  
 The Top and the Ball  
 Old Pipes and the Dryad

LIST OF BOOKS USED

Pyle, Howard—*Twilight Land*.  
 Pyle, Katherine—*Fairy Tales from Far and Near*.  
                               —*Fairy Tales from Many Lands*.  
 Scudder—*Book of Folk Stories*.  
 Skinner—*Happy Tales for Story Time*.  
                               —*Nursery Tales from Many Lands*.  
 Wiggin and Smith—*Fairy Ring*.  
                               —*Magic Casements*.  
 Wiltse—*Folk-love Stories*.

REFERENCE BOOKS FOR THE TEACHER

Barnes, Walter. *Types of Children's Literature*.  
 World Book Company. New York. 1919.  
 Curry, Charles Madison and Clippinger, Erle Elsworth. *Children's Literature*. Rand McNally and

# Creative Language of Kindergarten Children

DOROTHY W. BARUCH

*Director of Preschool Department, Broadoaks School of Education,  
Whittier College, Pasadena, California*

WHEN WE start to think of "language" as a part of school, many different connotations spring into mind. We may, perhaps, recall the old type of language period as described by Annie E. Moore in *The Primary School*. One child would be, for instance, appointed as the fairy. The other children would be told to shut their eyes. Then the fairy would touch someone and would wait in respectful silence while the teacher asked, "Was it you the fairy touched?" The child who was questioned would ponder a minute or two. He did not want to make any mistakes. There was one right answer. This the child would finally remember and stiffly recite, "No, it was not I." We can almost see him breathing a sigh of relief over not having let slip a more spontaneous, "No, she didn't touch me." The latter would not have served the purpose. Spontaneity was far removed from this purpose, which was to make certain phrases habitual and so to foster language.

Foster language! Imagine fostering language without spontaneity. How our concepts have changed. Spontaneity, freedom, creativity, are key words in our present philosophy.

Yet often they are merely words, which is sad. We speak them, and then in our practices we disregard them. This happens even in the kindergarten.

The picture rises before us: Children sitting with chairs in a tight little circle; teacher at the head. "Now it's your turn,

Mary Lou. You may tell us about the little red hen," and Mary Lou hesitantly begins to retell as she may, her thinking imitative, not spontaneous, free, or creative.

After all, what does Mary Lou, a city child, know about red hens? A curious teacher wondered, and in consequence asked, after having listened to another Mary Lou's recital, "Now make your own story about a little red hen. Make a different story from the one you heard."

At this Mary Lou grew thoughtful. She scowled for a moment, and smiled, "I know," she said, "he flew up on the roof and the little girl fed him crumbs."

To her, the hen, obviously a bird, acted as did the only bird she knew, the only bird she had experienced. To her the hen was a *he* even as the robin she had fed from her window.

Many teachers today are aware that children express themselves in words best when their words can germinate and grow out of the soil of experience. Therefore they encourage talking about things done, things made, about trips that have been travelled, about new babies at home, about anything which the child wishes to recall out of his living. Special periods are given over to talking about such things.

Again the circle gathers. Again the teacher takes the helm. "You tell about what you have made, Henry," and Henry begins,

I made a table.

I took a big piece of wood.

I took four little pieces of wood.

I took some nails.  
I hammered the little pieces on.  
I painted the table for our house.

"Very good. Now you, Jimmy."

I made a chair.  
I took some pieces of wood.  
I hammered the legs on.  
I painted the chair.  
It was for our house.

Very good! *But*, is this language creative? What is the trouble? There is a stiffness, a lack of joyousness, a lack of feeling quality or of true spontaneity—a lack of any essence of the child himself entering into what he is saying.

Yet should that not be our first aim—to let the child's language express the child himself? It need not be high and mighty, it need not be wordy or flowery or complex. It can be homey and simple, but it must be *natural* and free.

On the very day, just described, Henry's mother had been visiting school. Driving home in the car afterward, Henry once more started in, "It was a keen table, wasn't it? You should have seen me make it." Henry grew dreamy as he remembered, and his voice took on a sing-song quality,

I was so loud with the hammer,  
And so soft with the brush,  
And I stood my table up  
And it was finished and strong—  
Strong enough for all of me to sit on.

Henry's mother smiled. Into his account had come an expression of his own personal feeling about the making of his table, a feeling of pride, of accomplishment, totally different from the set recital of the morning. Henry had put himself into his words. The stiffness had gone out and spontaneity had come in. His language had become creative.

His mother questioned, "Why didn't you tell *that* story at school?"

"But you see, Mom," protested Henry, "You couldn't. Not things like sitting on a table, that's not right, the teacher

wouldn't like it. And anyway there's no time. We all just tell what's what, not make up extras."

We need time for extras. Time for language expression not only in our regular "circle," but time at all sorts of odd minutes during the day. We need it desperately if children are to have opportunities for the spontaneous expression of their own thoughts.

Children usually do express themselves in an easy spontaneous way that is their own, as they work and play and talk to themselves, to us, and to each other; and often in a way that possesses a patterning and a picture bearing quality that makes the language take on meaning and value to others as well as to themselves.

Four year old Rucky watches a speck high in the sky above. She stops her raking momentarily and turns to her neighbor,

The airplane,  
Way up in the sky,  
Goes way, way low,  
Goes way, way high,  
Over the land,  
Far off in a corner.

And Robert, her neighbor, five, answers,

I know,  
Some airplanes have pontoons.  
They're like big cigars,  
Like big cigars.

Each child has spontaneously put into words the thoughts that came to him, and each child's "stories," "poems," or whatever we wish to call them possess a distinct picture-bearing quality, making them take on meaning and value to others.

A teacher had been listening with sensitive ear. She had written down the words as they came. Later, after the raking was finished, and before Rucky or Robert had gone on to other things, she smiled at them and commented, "I have some stories here that you two made about the airplane that flew by a little while ago,"

and quite casually she read back the stories.

Rucky answered with a responsive smile, Robert echoed, "Like cigars," and both ran on toward a pile of blocks nearby.

Later, however, at the regular story time, Rucky asked, "Read about the airplane. Read the story I made and the one Robert made." This the teacher did.

What else had she done? She had in the first place, been sensitive to verbal patterns, and to loveliness of a homey sort, in the language of these children. She had moreover given them a glimpse of their own ability to pattern language in this way, without making them self-conscious. She had, in addition, brought to the other children, language "products" well more worth listening to than had been Jimmy's or Henry's stories about the making of their table and chair.

It is when we try to have all the children say their say at certain times and in certain ways that they so often bring out rigid, stiff little utterances. Some children are *ready* and able to give out their thoughts freely when they are surrounded by a group. George, five, for one, loses himself completely in what he is saying. He sees something, feels something, carries it into himself and becomes absorbed in it. As far as he is concerned, for the moment, other people simply are non-existent. He is sitting with the group, for instance, while the teacher is reading. He is staring up through the branches of the oak tree at the sky. Then apparently, he begins to see and feel that sky, and to carry it into himself. The teacher, the other children become non-existent, the story to which he is supposedly listening is not being heard. It is just as if there were no story. George breaks into it, as if he were totally unaware of its going on. He is alive with the wonder of what he sees and feels,

The sky all blue!  
Look, the trees are blowing.  
It has all that soft stuff,  
Clouds.  
They're moving.  
We can see them—  
The wind makes them move.  
They move over a different place.

When George is given a turn at story time to make a story, he can at will it seems, go back into himself and into past experience, and bring it forth verbally, forgetful of self, spontaneously and freely.

We must take many things into consideration. We must realize that the child's whole social-emotional development enters in, and that in consequence what we ask for in the way of creative language should be based on individual capacities and individual readiness.

The shy child will not be ready nearly as soon as the one who feels comfortably at home. The little show-off will be artificial before the crowd, and not ready until he has found how to be more forgetful of self. One little person grows silly, another grows high and shrill in voice, another mumbles and hangs his head. All these are signs of lack of readiness to use language creatively in the presence of the group.

Using language creatively in the group's presence and on request of another person is, after all, a complicated type of performance, calling for poise, for well-developed vocabulary, for diction that will be understood, and above all, for a *sense within oneself of one's own ability*. Not all kindergarten children have yet reached such a stage. They can build language patterns unconsciously, but when they are asked to build consciously, they hesitate and stumble, all unaware of their ability.

Therefore, should not a part of our aim be to help children to become aware of this ability which is theirs?

How are we to do it?



We must begin with each child where we find him. And we may find him at any one of several stages.

Roughly, stages in conscious creative production with language as poems or stories can be classified as follows:

**Stage I:**

The child gives out a monologue which at times falls into somewhat rhythmic, picture-carrying patterns.

There is no conscious production of story as such.

The language production is self-initiated. (i.e. child is not asked to give it out.)

**Stage II:**

The child tells about something to someone else. His conversation falls into patterns.

Still no conscious production of story as such.

The language production is again self-initiated.

**Stage III:**

Child tells about something to someone else at the request or suggestions of the other person—as when asked, "Tell me about what you were doing?" (no reference being made to "story"). Again verbalization falls at times into patterns.

Still no conscious production of story as such.

The language production is here in response to a request, not self-initiated.

**Stage IV:**

Child tells about a specific thing or occurrence when asked for a story about it, as when questioned, "Would you like to make a story about your train?"

Here there is conscious production of story.

Production is initiated at the request of another.

**Stage V:**

The child consciously produces a story, finding his own topic.

This may be self-initiated, as when he says, "I'd like to make a story . . ." or it may be initiated on the request of another, as when a teacher asks, "Would you like to make a story now?"

As can be seen, the production at any stage can be in the presence of one or many people, that is, the child may bring forth his story either alone, with a teacher present, with a few children informally clustered about, or with a formal group. The latter obviously entails need for a greater sense of ability.

Teaching techniques called for at the different stages vary. At stage I the teacher needs to do much recording of snatches of monologue. She needs to keep in mind that one of her aims is to help the child become aware of his ability, and that she will want to use techniques which will help him to such an awareness. Therefore she will read back to him the stories he has unconsciously made, letting him know he has made them, by saying, "This is a story you made," or "I wrote down a story while you were making it; I'll read it to you." Or she will read such stories to the group, again bringing to the child recognition for his having made them.

Perhaps, too, she will have an expandable loose-leaf book of the children's own stories to read from, in order to carry into still more concrete form proof of the children's ability. She will also read stories made by other children of the same age to bring out that the ability is a natural one common to young children and not one that entitles the maker of stories to special exploitation.

At stage II, techniques are the same.

At stage III, the teacher encourages the child to tell her about things. She gives him opportunities to talk with her alone, when others are not around, and to talk with her in the presence of one or two other children. Pertinent questions on her part may bring in just enough of her participation through encouragement and questions for the child to want to go further. Frequently, too, she will read back at once a bit which the child has given out, saying to him some such thought as "You were just making a story; I wrote it down. I'll read it to you, shall I?"

At stage IV the teacher does much as in stage III with the main difference in that now she asks if the child wants to make a story about this or that, whereas in stage III she was careful not to mention story until *after* the verbalization, feeling that doing so beforehand would block rather than encourage, since the child was apparently not yet ready for conscious production. One of her chief functions at this stage IV is to help the child feel free to talk by finding with him some topic to talk about.

At stage V, the teacher again carries on as in stage IV, letting the child however lean on himself in choosing his topic. Her chief concern at this stage is to avoid rushing him into conscious production in front of too large a group or in too formal a situation.

As we go back over the stages as outlined it becomes apparent that in our teaching we frequently make the mistake of beginning with all children at either the third or fourth stage, and that we give too few opportunities at the two first stages. There should instead be a gradual building up process.

It does not signify, however, that just because a child has grown into a capacity for consciously making stories we should immediately stop recording his less conscious verbal patternings, for often, even

after this stage of conscious production has been reached, the loveliest things come freely when a child is musing to himself.

Again let us reiterate: We must not force production.

It follows obviously that we must guard also against forcing into set patterns or forms.

It used to be that when poetry was in question, rhyming was thought to be necessary. Now we are wiser. We realize that poetry need not rhyme. We can feel poetry in five year old George's,

Sunset is not blue,  
Sunset is a rainbow!

We can feel a great deal more poetry in this than in

The rainbow it's true  
Is all pink and blue  
And many other colors too.

In conclusion, we want children to be free and spontaneous in their language. We want them to feel an ability to make stories or poetry. To do this we must guard against forcing in any shape, form, or manner, as by demanding stories in front of a group before the child feels readiness, or as by fixing or setting patterns.

We want in addition to foster in the child a sense of the beauty which language can possess so that his language may become increasingly lovely. To do this we shall want to read much poetry, cadenced unrhymed verse especially, since the children's own poetry is usually in cadence without rhyme, which calls for giving to them lovelier patterns of their own sort.

And we shall want to remember, most emphatically, that readiness in language expression is dependent on the child's social and emotional development, so that we will in encouraging language want to keep in tune with the child himself, as a whole being.

# A Bibliography of Unpublished Studies in Elementary School English, 1934-1936\*

BESS GOODYKOONTZ

*Assistant Commissioner, U. S. Office of Education*

(Continued from November)

## *Courses of Study and Textbooks*

THE STUDIES in this summary which bear upon textbooks and courses of study fall into three types: (1) analysis of content of existing courses and texts; (2) methods of evaluating or rating them; and (3) attempts to formulate courses of study for particular groups or grades. In the first group six studies analyze existing courses throughout the elementary school. Miss Ord (55)<sup>1</sup> analyzed twenty-six language courses in use in 1936 in first, second, and third grades. Oral and written composition, correct language usage, and literature made up the bulk of the courses, with more emphasis on oral than on written English, and little recognizable agreement on objectives, items of procedure, standards of attainment, and grade placement. Similarly, Miss Galleher (27) when she found little agreement in the skills to be emphasized in primary grades, examined ten texts and eleven courses of study. She found, too, considerable difference between texts and courses, texts emphasizing poem study for example, while the courses did not. Much the same findings are reported by Miss Laun, (40) who analyzed state and city courses of study, workbooks and textbooks to discover which specific oral and written lan-

guage skills are emphasized for fifth grades. She reports serious lack of agreement among authorities and little correlation between courses of study, textbooks, and workbooks.

In order to discover current trends in courses of study in English for fourth grade, Miss Whitfield (81) analyzed ten courses. She concluded that activities hold a prominent place, that life situations are emphasized, that language is already closely integrated with other subjects, particularly social and natural sciences. Mr. Works (83) analyzed English instruction in the junior high schools in Texas. Sister Mary Afra White (80) compared grammar content and grade placement in junior high school English textbooks, finding as before noted little agreement among them, indicating that decisions are, probably of necessity, made on the basis of subjective opinion. For example, of the 150 items found in the ninth grade textbooks only 17 are in all six books examined.

Objective methods of selecting textbooks for specific purposes are perennially, possibly naively, sought. Certainly if found they would be treasured by school officials entrusted with selection and purchase of books. Using the rating scale formulated by a Committee of the National Council of Teachers of English, Mr. Andrews (2) secured the help of a group of elementary teachers in rating

\* Read before the National Conference on Research in English, New Orleans, Louisiana, February 20, 1937.

<sup>1</sup> Parenthetical numbers refer to titles in the bibliography which was published in the November issue, page 254ff.

seven recent textbooks for intermediate grades. The agreements and differences found to exist should be helpful in evaluating the usefulness of the scale. By means of a questionnaire from teachers, principals, and supervisors, Miss Keirnes (38) secured estimates of the adequacy of content and its treatment in English textbooks. She found that teachers believe texts should give more emphasis to paragraph and sentence study, less to theme writing, more to conversation, and that literature and poetry should be a part of English study.

The construction of experimental courses of study or units of courses engaged the attention of five persons whose studies are listed here. Miss Newman (52) sought the advice of the graduating classes of the grammar schools from which students were to enter the J. L. Long Junior High School in 1933, and on the basis of their questionnaire replies together with data about existing courses, she planned a new course for the junior high school. Miss Sechler (63) used objective records of skill mastery for nearly five hundred primary children as a basis for formulating a pre-third grade course of study. Miss Fisher (25) developed language units for eighth grade.

#### *Error Studies and Remedial Drill Programs*

Although there are comprehensive lists of common errors in oral and written English, numerous studies of the errors of individual pupils and of certain classes continue to serve a useful purpose. The error studies included in this summary are of three types: those which analyzed errors of certain groups in certain types of work or situations; those which made a similar analysis and then developed remedial drill material for the specific situation; and those which attempted to discover most effective drill methods.

In the first group several studies aimed to identify types of errors for the several classes involved. Miss Dunn (23) recorded the errors in written composition of 37 individual pupils, finding that the number for each child ranged from 11 to 36 with a median of 23, with six errors constituting nearly a quarter of the total frequency for all pupils. Miss Bailey (4) threw some doubt on the efficacy of diagnosing children's errors by standardized tests when she found that in sampling the written work of children in fifth and sixth grades the largest percentage of errors were due to colloquialisms and slang and that there was no direct relation between errors made in tests and those made in compositions. Sister Mary Lucy Clancy's (16) evaluation of the Pressey tests also appeared to show little relation between errors made on the tests and those made in themes.

Verb errors were found by Miss Ginder (29) to bulk the largest in her analysis of the grammatical errors made in 796 friendly letters written by children in third, fourth, fifth, and sixth grades in 44 states, Canada, and Mexico. The total number of errors was 1231, with a small number of mistakes proving responsible for the majority of errors in each grade. Letters formed the basis also of Miss Howard's (36) study of errors made by children in grades seven, eight, and nine. She found that practically the same errors appeared in all grades, but with some encouraging change in frequency from grade to grade. Most frequent mistakes were misplacing parts of the letter and over-generosity in punctuation and capitalization.

Four other studies of errors included the development of remedial drill material to correct the specific errors discovered. Miss Connelly (17) and Miss Adams (1) summarized previous error studies and developed remedial exercises,



one for general use in elementary schools, the other for junior high grades. Miss Case (14) analyzed nearly 700 letters written by children in grades two to six, made a list of common errors and prepared tests and drills for remedial work. None of these three reported measuring the effectiveness of the drill material. Miss Miller (48) made an error study of failing pupils in a seventh grade, formulated a remedial program which resulted in 68 per cent of the pupils reaching seventh grade norm.

Four students at the State University of Iowa experimented with self-help drill materials to measure their effectiveness both for immediate and delayed recall and to compare them with other methods of remedial work. Mr. Mortimore (50), Mr. Bodine (8), and Mr. Stacy (65), used self-help drill materials in junior high grades, finding the drill materials to produce excellent improvement. Mr. Stacy concluded that the use of such materials "appreciably increases pupil achievement, intensifies pupil interest, develops a language consciousness and self-reliance, and improves scholarship." In an experiment conducted in intermediate grades of forty-four rural schools and six graded elementary schools at Grand Rapids, Minnesota, Mr. Tiedeman (70), compared the effectiveness of using self-help drill materials with theme-writing. In the theme-writing groups, children received their corrected compositions from the teachers for discussion and further consideration. The self-help drill materials were superior to this procedure for four out of six cases. In a somewhat similar experiment Miss Haycock (31) compared the use of the Pribble-Brezler practice cards with "regular classroom methods." Twenty-seven teachers co-operated in using the practice cards, which proved superior to usual classroom methods both in immediate gain and in scores at the end of a year.

### *Grammar*

Closely related to the preceding discussion of the discovery and elimination of language errors is a group of studies of the place of grammar in the English course. In order "to gather facts from English grammars that would show how far we have gone from the days of Aristotle" Miss Davis (19) analyzed English grammars beginning with Stanbridge's of 1528. For the second part of the study she surveyed the reports of committees, textbooks, courses of study for intermediate grades to see how parts of speech were treated. Finally she secured information by questionnaire from 18 Michigan towns concerning the teaching of parts of speech in upper grades. From all of this she concluded that there is a long road yet to travel before functional grammar is an actuality. Miss Eberling (24) adds to this when after an examination of grammar teaching in upper elementary grades and junior high she concludes that much so-called functional grammar is not really functioning in composition habits, and is in fact probably not functional at all.

This leads naturally to speculation and investigation on how to make grammar instruction really effective. Six studies bear on this problem. Two considered the effectiveness of written methods in improving grammar usage, Miss Bailey (5) comparing the effectiveness of oral and written methods in teaching verbs and Miss Lombard (44) comparing the effectiveness of written composition with formal instruction in improving technical grammar. In the first study both methods served simply to confuse the seventh grade pupils; in the second the experimental group which had individualized guidance in written composition made more improvement than did the control group. In a controlled experiment on the guide sheet versus the recitation method

of teaching grammar and composition in eighth grade, Miss Cunkelman (18) found the recitation method superior at first, but with increasing familiarity with the techniques of the guide sheets pupils using that method made increasingly greater gains over those who continued with the usual methods. Similarly Miss Sarbaugh (61) compared the relative value of supervised study with the assignment-study period-home work procedure with which pupils were familiar, finding however that the accustomed routine showed greater value, for that group and for the limited time of the experiment. Limiting her study to methods of teaching verbs, Miss Brunelli (10) found inductive methods superior to deductive.

Of quite a different sort is Miss Benfer's (6) study of the relation of sentence sense to the ability to recognize sentence subjects and predicates. Testing 262 sixth grade pupils in Bartlesville, Oklahoma, she concluded quite surprisingly that intelligence is not highly related to ability to recognize sentences and their integral parts, nor are sentence sense and the ability to identify subjects and predicates conspicuously related.

### *Punctuation*

Four studies completed at the State University of Iowa deal with the needs pupils of intermediate grades have for punctuation skills and the extent of their control of them. Mr. Holte (35) sought answers to the following questions: (1) How many situations do pupils of the fifth grade create calling for each rule of punctuation? (2) With what frequency is each used? (3) How much efficiency does the pupil show in the rules appearing with greatest frequency especially? (4) Is the situation the same in all types of composition? (5) Which punctuation situations does he ignore? (6) On what rules should the informal emphasis be

placed? Analyzing 167,000 running words from samplings of children's work he concluded that the period and comma variations should receive the major share of instructional attention in the fifth grade since these usages account for almost 82 per cent of all punctuation usage. For this purpose he then prepared a list of twenty-two rules or variations which account for 80 per cent of all occasions for punctuation made by fifth grade students and show an average percentage of error of 54.8. Mr. Busboom (12) analyzed business and friendly letters of sixth grade pupils totaling 43,700 running words to determine what punctuation situations children face in letter writing, and how effective the group of children examined were in using punctuation. Encouragement was found in the fact that in 10,344 punctuation situations in the friendly letters approximately 70 per cent were used correctly, 5 per cent incorrectly, 20 per cent omitted, and approximately 5 per cent involved substitutions. In business letters the record was even better, showing 85 per cent of the situations handled correctly.

Closely related to the findings of this study are those of Miss Tapper (66) who investigated the extent of pupil control over punctuation in business and friendly letters by administering a test based on twenty punctuation usages peculiar to letter writing. She found that pupils in intermediate grades responded correctly to the punctuation skills used in the test more than 60 per cent of the time, and that the extent of control increases from grade to grade. A similar investigation by Miss Wheeler (79) measured the extent of control of intermediate grades over period usages through a test constructed to present 98 items of period usage. Miss Wheeler summarized types of difficulty of greatest frequency, and recommended the use of

drill materials which increase pupils' power to discriminate between correct and incorrect usage.

### *Tests, Scales, and Testing Techniques*

Most of the studies having to do with measurement represent experiments to determine reliable testing techniques. For example, Mr. Bente (7) used three specially designed tests each containing the same content but differing in testing technique. These techniques were designated the recognition-recall test, in which pupils were to recognize the single missing punctuation mark and place it correctly; the proof-reading test, which contained errors both of commission and of omission; the error-correction form which carried all necessary marks but in which one error was to be noted and corrected. Scores of 516 children in grades five and six in six elementary schools showed slight superiority for the recognition-recall form in reliability, validity, scoring time, and objectivity.

Four studies attempted to determine the validity and the usefulness of proof-reading tests as used in the Iowa Every-Pupil Test in Basic Language Skills. Mr. Trimble (72) gave the tests to 180 pupils in grades six, seven, and eight of public schools in Iowa and later gave them the same material as a dictation test. He concluded that although the ability to correct errors in print is not positive indication of ability to write correctly, nevertheless the proof-reading type of test is a fairly valid measure of punctuation skills. Mr. Church (15) duplicated the experiment with a later form of the test, concluding that a specific proof-reading ability, not highly related to the abilities needed in actual writing, appears to be involved in taking the proof-reading type of test. Mr. Van Dyke (74), duplicating the experiment in grades eight and nine, found the proof-reading test a highly

valid measure of pupils' ability in spelling and punctuation, a fairly reliable measure in usage skill, and not reliable as a measure of capitalization. He also concluded that proof-reading requires some ability not required to the same degree in the dictation test. Mr. Lorenz (45), in an earlier experiment with the test with pupils of grades six, seven, and eight, found that either the dictation or multiple-choice technique was adequate in testing spelling ability. Two other studies, by Miss Davitt (21) and Miss Victor (75), analyzed the responses on the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills, and made further measures of the validity of certain parts of the test by comparing the scores made on them with the scores on existing standardized tests.

In an entirely different type of study Miss Warner (78) used the compositions in her school system to devise a scale for measuring written composition. She reported such a procedure as a valuable motivating device.

### *Growth in Vocabulary and Other Language Elements*

An individual's language habits and skills develop, or at least change, whether or not he has formal instruction or guidance. From birth to maturity, every individual is surrounded by many stimuli affecting language responses. Two studies reported in this summary deal with language growth. In one, by Miss Kiesling (39), records were made of first grade children's oral contributions to ascertain the language skills used in making brief oral summaries. These were then analyzed in order to identify definite developmental trends evident in the connected discourse of first grade children over a period of a year. Some of the factors indicative of growth were an increase in the number of running words; an increase in the number of ideas; an increase in the

number of mature sentences. Miss Little (42) analyzed the language achievement of 285 children ranging from one month to 80 months in age and from her findings constructed a scale to show language development. She summarized her findings by saying: "Indications are that there is a pretty generally followed sequence of language development and there is relative difficulty of items as shown by the number of children at each age level who are able to score on an item."

Attempts to discover what influences affect vocabulary and language development account for three studies in the summary. Miss McFarland (46) used a vocabulary test to compare the vocabulary status of children who had attended a preschool with a group of children who had not attended preschool, but found no significant difference. Miss Dowley (22) attempted to find out what effect the teachers' use of positive, directive, constructive, and encouraging language had had on the language of their pupils in the University Elementary School at the University of Michigan. A rating scale for teachers was already in use, on which negative and reproving language such as "stop," "don't," etc., was rated 1 and constructive suggestions such as "do," "go," etc., were rated 5. Adapting this scale to rating children's language, and analyzing the speech of children in the school, Miss Dowley found that girls tend to talk more than boys at all age levels; that boys tend to be more constructive and positive; that there is a significant increase in the amount of constructive language within each grade and with length of attendance in school.

Recognizing the many influences on vocabulary development, Miss Reilly (59) constructed tests which she used to discover pupils' vocabulary habits. She concluded that greater word learning resulted from motion picture stories, gangster magazines, and comic literature than

from articles based on science, investigation, and travel. Pupils whose average in school subjects would classify them as poor students excelled the average student in detective, comic, and invention terms.

Three studies reported experiments to determine vocabulary meaning difficulty or techniques of improving understanding of meaning. Mr. Tilley (71) administered word meaning tests to nearly 3,000 children in third, fifth, and seventh grades to determine the relative difficulty of word meanings both in context and in isolation. He concluded that the judgment of pupils as to whether they know certain word meanings is highly reliable. On the other hand, Miss Hilzinger (33) constructed a test on factual material in eighth grade history to determine the amount of pure verbalism shown by eighth grade, finding that the actual occurrence of verbalism ranged from 4.5 per cent of the possible occurrence to 8.8 per cent for the high and low intelligence groups respectively. Recognizing the serious meaning problem present in the first grade, Miss Williams (82) tried successfully the method of sentence drill on a selected list of difficult words. Miss Hobbs (34) experimented with a series of dictionary drills in fifth grades. Miss Caraway (13) used existing lists of commonest words in speaking and writing to devise a spelling vocabulary suited to first and second grade children. The criterion of selection was their frequency of need in writing and speaking.

A very extensive investigation, made by Mr. Raubicheck (58), of the efficacy of phonetics in elementary school speech training is related, though less directly than others, to the language problems dealt with in this summary. Briefly, it was found that speech training on the phonetic basis involving ear training, sound analysis, sound recognition, and the international phonetic alphabet proved generally superior both immediately and



after an interval, to the phonic method then in use in the New York City schools.

### *Composition*

A considerable number of the studies already reported have related in some way to composition, but two others remain to be reported. In one of them, an elaborate study of the types of stimuli most productive of good oral language in intermediate grades, Mr. Netzer (51) found that objects produced better responses than either uncompleted stories or pictures. Mr. Goltry (30) analyzed more than 100,000 running words of oral composition from pupils in intermediate grades to discover the types and complexity of sentence structure. He found that the use of independent clauses increases with the older students and that oral composition is slightly more complex than written.

### *Other Studies*

Not classifiable in the other general groups, three remaining studies may be summarized briefly here. Miss Meers (47) took the practical problem of describing as accurately as possible the findings of the Louisville survey of language and composition in the fourth and fifth grades and planning a specific instructional program based upon them. Mr. Tubre (73) compared the effectiveness of the supervised study method with the question-answer method for pupils in the 7B grade of an Alexandria, Louisiana school, with the palm going to the question-answer method.

In spite of what must be a rather general conviction that the teacher's English has an important influence on the language of her pupils, studies of the teacher's performance or influence are few. One study, Miss Dowley's (22) did attempt to measure the influence of teachers' verbal directions on the speech of the children. Another study opens up inter-

esting speculation: Mr. Von Eschen (77) measured the performance of 100 experienced teachers of grades four to eight in 20 Iowa public schools on the Iowa Every-Pupil Tests of Basic Skills, finding that a considerable degree of overlap exists in the performance of pupils and teachers and that the upper ten per cent of the pupils have only one chance in three of having a teacher whose ability in language skills is equal to their own.

Now what does this all add to our knowledge and how may it affect practice? It is not fair or reasonable to propose any brief, general summary of the techniques of investigation which have been originated by these many studies nor of the findings which they have disclosed. They cover too many fields and delve into too many complicated problems to be adequately treated in such a way. It might be helpful in viewing the contributions made by these 83 studies, however, to consider some of the questions and problems to which they invite thought and further investigation. Ten major classes of studies were reviewed; the questions will be listed in the same order.

1. Studies of the integration of language guidance in other parts of the curriculum outlined detailed, and apparently successful, procedure.

In what curriculum fields is this most feasible?

How may such procedures be incorporated in the courses of study?

Does integration of language with other subjects eliminate or minimize language as a special field of instruction?

2. Studies of the language problems of handicapped children, such as the blind, the deaf, the retarded, attempted to discover the specific language problems faced by each group by reason of the handicap.

How should language instruction be modified for each group?

3. Studies of creative writing represented attempts to find ways of evaluating and improving the product.

What are the characteristics of creative writing as distinguished from just plain writing?

Are there techniques of creativeness?

Can whatever equipment the teacher needs for this purpose be acquired?

4. Studies of language courses and textbooks were characterized principally by lack of agreement on what ought to go in them.

What prevents a fairly complete and immediate agreement on what is needed in courses and texts?

5. Studies of language errors and drill materials emphasized the need for discovering and remedying the specific errors, not the possible errors, of a class.

Are home-made drill materials apt to be successful?

What are the characteristics of good drill materials?

6. Studies of grammar centered principally on how to make it pay its way.

Is "functional grammar" a kind of grammar or a method of teaching it?

From available studies can basic minimums be set?

7. Studies of punctuation asked, and answered, the question: What punctuation is needed by children for certain specific situations?

What other language situations could profitably be analyzed in the same way?

8. Studies of measurement were primarily concerned with determining the validity of certain types of test items in standardized language tests.

The types of test items used in language tests are used in tests in other fields. Do the findings hold true for them?

Drill materials use these same types. Do the findings apply to them?

9. Studies of growth in vocabulary and other language elements brought out valuable information on how vocabulary grows and how language habits develop.

How do attitudes and emotions influence language?

To what extent and in what ways do teachers' language habits affect children's?

What can the language curriculum do to reduce the serious amount of verbalism in the schools?

10. Studies of composition reiterated the probability of improved quality and correctness of written English when it is highly charged with purpose.

Where does this charge come from?

Does the language course have content of its own or must it draw from other parts of the school day?

# Elementary English in the Evening School

BENJAMIN LOWENBERG

*Albany Evening High School, Albany, New York*

THE EVENING school teaching situation is naturally quite different from that of the day school where, for the most part, the students are grouped according to chronological and mental ages and according to the number of years spent in school. In the evening school the age range is from seventeen to seventy; and the number of years of schooling may vary from one or two grades of formal education to high school graduation that has failed to give the fundamentals of English. In the elementary and even in the high school, many students are forced to attend by parents or by state law; in the evening school the student is present of his own volition and strictly "for business" in order to advance himself in his job, in order to overcome some feeling of inferiority, or merely for the purpose of improving his knowledge.

Although fifteen is the minimum number required to incorporate a class in the Albany Evening School, the elementary English groups run invariably from twenty to thirty students, with a usual total enrollment of fifty students from all walks of life. In Albany the popular misconception of elementary English as "Americanization" or "Citizenship" does not exist because these subjects are offered separately. For this reason, the type of student attracted to the elementary English class is one who has a comparatively good acquaintance with spoken English.

Too, elementary English for an evening school class need no longer be a complexity. In spite of the fact that the

age and previous training range is so great we at the Albany Evening School feel that a course similar to that which we shall discuss here would, in all probability, be a good one for most schools. Although classes are from seven to nine, four night a week, Monday through Thursday, the elementary English classes run merely for one hour, two nights a week. The other hour is devoted either to business English or to the more advanced work such as the English III and IV of New York State.

The purpose of the elementary English class as taught in the Albany Evening School is to satisfy the needs of all students. At first glance this might seem to be an impossible task; nevertheless the work can be so administered that people who have little formal schooling can pass the New York State English III regents' examination, which is the equivalent of the English offered in the junior year of high school. When one stops to consider that the evening school student is on a "short time" basis and must receive a minimum passing grade of 75 per cent as compared with the day school students' 65, it is obvious that the former must apply himself conscientiously and diligently to his work.

The philosophy controlling the elementary English course at the Albany Evening High School is that if basic fundamentals of English are learned, the student will have a real foundation to which he can easily add literature work. If he learns spelling, parts of speech (detailed), clauses (noun, adjective, adverb),

sentences (simple, compound, complex), punctuation, and sentence structure, he will have an English background difficult to surpass; he will be like the well-trained lineman on the football team. In short, learning the fundamentals is the basis of success; no fundamentals, no real knowledge.

The recitation of the elementary English groups in the Albany Evening School start at 7:05 when practically everyone should be in his seat. However, late arrivals should not be refused admittance to class. Supplied with his own notebook and paper, the student copies, before class, twenty-five spelling words on which he will be tested during the next class period. The student also hands in three common words which he has never used previously but which he will employ in the future. If he has any work which he wishes corrected, he also gives this to the teacher. The ten minutes from 7:05 to 7:15 are devoted to spelling drill; at the end of the year the progress of the conscientious student is in many cases remarkable. In this way the mastery of 2000 to 4000 spelling demons is obtained. A good introductory list is that of the New York State syllabus.

The first part of the year is devoted almost entirely to parts of speech. Although in some classes text books are advisable, a group can work without any text if the teacher dictates the rules to the student so that the latter may have the concrete experience of writing his own rules instead of obtaining them vicariously from a book. The classes in our school have given the first two weeks to nouns; then our procedure with the same ratio of time has been as follows:

Pronouns: personal, demonstrative, relative, interrogative, indefinite.

Case, Gender, Number

Verbs: tense, principal parts (pointing out that from the first principal part we obtain present and future; from the sec-

ond principal part, the past; from the third, present perfect, past perfect, future perfect); regular and irregular; voice (active, passive); transitive and intransitive.

Adjective comparison: positive, comparative, superlative.

Adverb comparison: positive, comparative, superlative.

Conjunctions: coordinate, subordinate, correlative.

Prepositions

Interjections

Verbals: gerund, infinitive, participles, present and past.

All this is to be done with frequent review and constant drill.

After this material has been completed, many students will be able to analyze sentences. The fact that people analyze sentences well, in itself, means very little or nothing, but the improvement of the language and the application of rules learned is noteworthy. The number of "Who don't," "ain't," and "youse people" decreases materially from the beginning to the end of the year.

For the sentences, time will probably permit only a consideration of these:

Simple, compound, complex, compound-complex.

Subject: simple, complete, compound.

Predicate: verb; complete, compound predicate.

Clauses: independent, dependent.

A great deal of work cannot be done with punctuation under this schedule except to give the rules and some drill.

For outside reading it is inadvisable to assign fourth, fifth or sixth grade books because of the chronological age of these people. However, *The Tale of Two Cities*, Irving's *Sketchbook* or like books taken from the list for the seventh grade and up of the New York syllabus can be recommended. It has been found practical to ask students to read outside of class a novel, a play, a biography or autobiography, poetry, a few essays and short



stories, and one or two current books. If the reading habit can be inculcated in adults, it is one which will not readily disappear. However, we should be careful not to assign too much outside reading.

If, when the classes finish in March, the teacher feels that the outlined fundamentals have been learned, he can, without trepidation, assign advanced work to his pupils from March to June. A mutual feeling of satisfaction prevails for student and teacher when a mature student, with very little previous formal education, goes on to pass the English III regents' examination, and in rare instances, the English IV. In this case hard work and conscientious effort has earned its just due.

Yet this elementary work is not a strict preparation for examinations; rather it is such that the student who fails to master the work thoroughly may return the next year and by diligent effort can complete his knowledge of the mechanics of the English language. As we can see, so much more actual work can be accomplished in an evening school in less time because the man or woman who attends these classes wants to learn.

In conclusion, let us remember that if an elementary English class concerns itself with spelling, parts of speech, sentence structure, clauses, and punctuation, thoroughly given, the teacher will always have larger classes and will be rendering a true service to the community.

### THE 3-B'S WRITE FAIRY TALES

(Continued from page 287)

- Company. New York. 1921.
- Dalglish, Alice. *First Experiences with Literature*. Charles Scribner's Sons. New York. 1932.
- Fay, Lucy E. and Eaton, Anne T. *Instruction in the Use of Books and Libraries*. The Boston Book Company. Boston, Mass. 1915.
- Gardner, Emelyn E. and Ramsey, Eloise. *A Handbook of Children's Literature*. Scott, Foresman and Company. 1927.
- Kready, Laura F. *A Study of Fairy Tales*. Houghton, Mifflin and Company. 1916.
- Lowe, Orton. *Literature for Children*. The Macmillan Company. New York. 1914.
- MacClintock, Porter Lander. *Literature in the Elementary School*. The University of Chicago Press. Chicago. 1908.
- Moses, Montrose J. *Children's Books and Reading*. Mitchell Kennerley. New York. 1907.

### BOOKS FOR THE STORY-TELLER

- Bone, Woutrina A. *Children's Stories*. Harcourt, Brace and Company. New York. 1924.
- Bryant, Sara Cone. *How to Tell Stories to Children*. Houghton, Mifflin and Company. New York. 1905.
- Bryant, Sara Cone. *Stories to Tell to Children*. Houghton, Mifflin and Company. New York. 1907.
- Cather, Katherine Dunlap. *Educating by Story Telling*. World Book Company. New York. 1920.
- Partridge, Emelyn Newcomb and Partridge, George Everett. *Story-Telling in School and Home*. The Macmillan Company. New York. 1920.
- Shedlock, Marie L. *The Art of the Story-Teller*. D. Appleton and Company. New York. 1915.

# Principles of Method in Elementary English Composition

HARRY A. GREENE

*Professor of Education, University of Iowa*

(Continued from November)

## V. MEASUREMENT OF RESULTS IN ENGLISH

The contributions which research has made to the problems of measurement of English abilities appear to center around the following four main areas: (1) the limitations and unreliability of teacher measurement unaided by objective instruments; (2) the identification and analysis of specific language abilities; (3) the development and refinement of objective instruments; and (4) the experimental evaluation of certain techniques of measurement in language.

### A. There is need for objective means of measuring expressional abilities.

Makers of composition scales attempted to evaluate the general merit of English expression in terms of a central tendency of judgments. Individual readers might, through individual bias or lack of training in the use of such scales, deviate somewhat from this typical judgment. In spite of this and the numerous other criticisms leveled against scales and their use in the English classroom, English composition scales have, as Lyman (105) points out, "undoubtedly rendered great service in calling the attention of teachers and of schools to the necessity for appraising accomplishments in written composition in something better than guesswork."

Following the pioneer work of Ballou (7), Bliss (13), Breed (21), and Hillegas (82), improved scales based upon

experience in the use of the earlier scales and the criticisms launched against them were developed by Hudelson (92), Lewis (103), Trabue (148), Van Wagenen (151), Willing (158), and others. Most of the more recent scales measure special types of composition. Some point out for the teacher the specific factors which appear to condition quality. Van Wagenen (151) insisted that content, structure and mechanics must each be considered in a separate scale. Willing (158) provided both quality and form standards for his scale. Lewis (103) provided instruments for the measurement of letter writing, a highly important language ability from a social point of view.

Current criticisms of composition scales bear more heavily on the inadequate basis for remedial work which their use provides than on the inadequacy of the scales themselves. More training in the use of scales in all related fields, such as spelling, handwriting and art, has made their use more acceptable to the classroom teacher and in general has done much to improve the objective measurement of results in English.

### B. Teachers themselves are not too well qualified to evaluate children's compositions.

Two important factors appear to condition the teacher's ability to evaluate children's compositions. The first of these is the high unreliability of all such subjective estimates regardless of the subject

in which the estimation takes place. Numerous studies of the unreliability of teachers' marks offer convincing evidence on this point. The studies of Hudelson (91), Lewis (103), and Starch and Elliott (137) are only brief samples from a long list of investigations supporting this statement.

The second is the fact that teachers of English are themselves not adequately sensitive to even the most flagrant types of errors made by their pupils (152). Preliminary evidence obtained by administering comprehensive tests of English skills to many teachers reveals the fact that they have a startling lack of control over the skills they are supposed to be qualified to teach to their pupils. Other evidence on this point was contributed by Leonard (101). He asked 181 teachers of English to examine a prepared set of fifty sentences making whatever corrections or changes they would expect a high school pupil to make in the sentences. Some of the sentences contained flagrant errors while others were taken from the works of recognized authors. Many of the common errors were not recognized or changed by large percentages of the teachers. On the other hand, many common idioms used by reputable writers were changed by the teachers. Another characteristic of English teachers pointed out by Leonard (101) is their unfortunate tendency to "change a pupil's quite acceptable form, or one not seriously wrong, to one quite shockingly illiterate."

**C. The use of composition scales significantly reduces the variability in teachers' estimates of composition merit.**

Evidence on this point appears to be somewhat contradictory (22, 31, 41, 151) although it is believed that the preponderance of the more recent and more carefully controlled experimental evidence justifies the above statement. Van Wage-

nen (151) presents evidence strongly favoring the use of the scales in reducing the variability in teachers' judgments. Theisen (142) had twelve compositions of known merit scored twice by fifteen teachers using the Nassau scale. Unaided judgments ranged from 33 points below to 52 points above the standard values. The aided judgments resulted in a 39 per cent reduction in variation on the first attempt of the teachers to use the scale.

**D. Available scales for measuring general merit of composition are limited in validity and reliability.**

The fact that scales for the measurement of English composition depend upon a consensus of judgments and general merit means that for many readers the scales will be lacking in validity for certain functions. Training in the use of composition scales undoubtedly does much to reduce the unreliability of measurement due to the difference in the discrimination of the judges, but it cannot remove it all. Scales, the use of which depends upon personal judgments, cannot be as reliable as more objective forms of measuring instruments.

**E. Training in the use of composition scales significantly reduces their unreliability.**

A composition scale in the hands of a classroom teacher untrained and inexperienced in its use would be comparable to a slide-rule in the hands of an engineering freshman. Regardless of the merit of the instrument itself, its use would be awkward as well as unreliable and misleading. Just as the novice must learn to read the scale of the vernier or the slide-rule, so must the teacher be trained in the use of a judgment scale. Hudelson (91) and Willing (158) both show that composition scales in the hands of untrained persons are unreliable. Brandenburg

(20) showed that college teachers of English reduced their variability significantly through the use of scales. The scorers used in the Gary survey reduced their unreliability through training almost 40 per cent (38). Hudelson (91), working with a large number of teachers, found that successive hours of practice in the use of the scale reduced the variations in their scores. The experience of the writer indicates that while there are rather wide individual differences in responsiveness to training in the use of such scales, most classroom teachers respond very well to two periods of training of one hour each. On most modern scales two hours of directed training will markedly reduce variations in judgments.

**F. Certain outcomes of language expression are difficult if not impossible to measure objectively.**

Early critics of scales held that they were largely useless because they failed to consider such essentials of language expression as content, originality, style, etc. (43). Objective methods have not fared much better in attempts to measure certain of these qualities. Perhaps one reason may lie in the fact that they are not too definitely developed by instruction. Thus far, the ability of the student to organize his thoughts expressed in verbal form has been measured most artificially and inadequately, yet every teacher realizes the importance of the development of this ability. Objective tests measure only a few of the more obvious and mechanical areas of skill (120, 65). Perhaps these mechanical skills constitute the skeleton of the language structure, and the elements of style, content, organization, structure, vocabulary, etc., are the things which determine whether the structure is tawdry or imposing.

**G. Effective measurement of mechanical skills and usages in English**

**means extensive sampling of many distinct skills.**

Low correlations between scores on English tests, and marks given by teachers are prevalent (28, 126). Low correlations between different English test scores are also common. These results indicate that English is made up of many different abilities and skills, few of which are measured by a single test. Pressey (120) concluded that English composition involves a number of factors, and constructed tests of spelling, grammar, capitalization and punctuation abilities which in composite showed a high correlation with teachers' pooled judgments of composition ability. Ballenger (6) by statistical treatment selected eleven tests from a battery of twenty which showed the highest correlation with estimated English ability. Each test showed the highest possible correlation with the composition and the lowest inter-correlation with each other test-part comprising the battery. A new group test for use in the primary grades proposes to sample eight specific language abilities (132). These investigations indicate clearly the necessity for wide sampling of specific English abilities if valid and reliable measurement of English is to be accomplished.

**H. From the diagnostic point of view most objective tests of language usage introduce certain elements of invalidity.**

Most modern objective tests of language skills rely on the pupil's ability to recognize, identify and correct an error. An element of invalidity in diagnosis arises here due to the assumption that the pupil's ability to recognize the error is in itself evidence that the usage is therefore a part of his own habits of expression. Some very recent attempts at test construction in this field (66) confront the pupil with situations in which he responds to



a specific series of reactions, such as the placement of all of the capitals in the test copy or of all of the punctuation marks. The difficulty of scoring such test items which has tended to deter test-makers from using these techniques is being overcome by the use of specially designed scoring stencils.

**I. Analytical tests as contrasted with the diagnostic types will doubtless prevail in English.**

In marked contrast with arithmetic, language does not lend itself to analysis into related hierarchies of habits. In language, such skills as choosing the correct word or using capital letters properly appear to have little or no relation to each other, yet each contributes in a definite way to the total mastery of language. Thus, measurement in language appears to be a matter of sampling many independent and unrelated areas in the hope that the really important skills may be included. The low correlation of one language test with another (126), or of each of several tests with the actual expressional ability of the child is evidence in support of this statement (6, 50, 120).

**I. More objective means are needed for the evaluation of oral-composition abilities.**

The difficulties involved in securing accurate and verbatim records of oral expression complicate its measurement. Suggestions have been made (77, 89) for the development of scales for measuring oral compositions similar to those in use in the measurement of written expression. The development of instruments for the accurate recording of oral activities under reasonably practical school conditions may make practical the use of such scales (11, 64, 68). Preliminary results from a project under way in the writer's language laboratory for the purpose of

evaluating different types of stimuli for oral expression suggest such possibilities (109).

Score cards designed to focus the listeners' attention on specific characteristics of the speaker's audience attitudes, posture, voice (both intensity and placement), articulation and enunciation, phrasing, breathing, sentence sense, etc., appear to offer definite possibilities for more objective measurement in this field (8).

**K. Recognition-correction types of test exercises are more effective than alternate-response or the proof-reading types in testing capitalization, punctuation and usage skills.**

Considerable experimentation has been undertaken in the validation of testing techniques. The results of these investigations should definitely point the way to improvement in the construction of language test items.

In an experiment with ninth grade pupils, Willing (158) found that a proof-reading test was superior to a composition test for the purpose of revealing individual weaknesses. He also shows that the reliability of the proof-reading test was quite superior to that of the composition test. Haworth (80) constructed two sets of test items on the same content, one using the recognition-correction form and the other the alternate-response form. While no significant differences in the validity or objectivity of the test items appeared in his data, he did find a definite superiority in the reliability of the recognition-correction form. Stickney (138), in a similar type of study, shows that the recognition-correction form of the item was equally valid, slightly more reliable, and much more economical in teacher and pupil time expenditure than were multiple-choice items over the same

content. Spaulding (135) found that the recognition-correction form of the item was just as valid, significantly higher in reliability, and was more economically scored by the teacher than was the proof-reading test item over the same punctuation skills. On the other hand, Reno (125) found that a proof-reading technique was slightly superior to a recognition form for the measurement of similar abilities.

**L. Error counts based on pupils' written products are impractical as a method of measurement of language abilities.**

Willing (158) found that adequate diagnosis of formal abilities in written expression are possible only through the analysis of very large amounts of material. Powell (118) checked ninth grade themes in an effort to determine the efficiency of the error count and the error-quotient as measures of English mastery. He found that the extent of sampling necessary and the time required for an adequate error check practically invalidated this method for ordinary classroom use.

**M. Certainty of pupil response to a language test item gives no assurance of the accuracy of the response.**

A part of instruction in language usage is the establishment of a reasonable assurance on the part of the pupil that his usage is correct. This is an aspect of the language consciousness discussed earlier in this report. However, the evidence indicates that pupils respond incorrectly to certain test items with as much certainty as they respond correctly (17). This is further evidence of the need for a positive-acting language consciousness built upon more firmly fixed habits of language usage.

## **VI. REMEDIAL AND CORRECTIVE INSTRUCTION**

The overlap of this section with the statements included in Section IV is so great that there is much difficulty in classifying the principles in one category or the other. The principles included in this section are intended to deal primarily with questions of procedure involved in remedial and corrective teaching as contrasted with those arising out of initial instruction.

**A. Exact diagnosis is prerequisite to efficient remedial work in language.**

Diagnosis as a basis for effective remedial work must be specific and accurate (65). In general such exact and intensive diagnosis has not been possible in English due to the types of measuring instruments now prevailing. Composition scales are too unreliable and vague to afford an accurate basis for remedial work (48). Most language usage tests, while objective, nevertheless sample numerous areas of skills which themselves are not highly interrelated (158). Exact diagnosis of the type possible in such fields of subject matter as arithmetic is apparently impossible in English. Thus far only fairly adequate analytical tests have been produced. Even in tests of this type there is some invalidity due to the fact that the pupil may recognize and correct a specific item and yet not be able to use it effectively in his own language expression.

**B. Remedial drill lessons should follow the pupil's own creative efforts.**

Learning correct language habits is a personal accomplishment. The most effective way to personalize a drill situation is to relate it to the child's own creative efforts. While there is little or no exact

evidence on this point known to the writer, there is much implied evidence from the studies of individual instruction methods. Seegers (128) found that the stimulation of pupil self-correction reduced the number of errors in test themes by 50 per cent in spite of the fact that the May papers were 40 per cent longer than the papers written at the beginning of the year. Bowles (19), Kimmel (97), Perry (115), and others found that pupils were distinctly motivated when placed on their own responsibility for creative and corrective work. The pupil seems to be much more impressed with the importance of a usage he may meet in corrective drill when he recognizes it as one with which he himself has had trouble in the past.

**C. Remedial lessons based upon the actual errors made by children produce significant results.**

The basis for this statement rests upon two other fundamental principles in language teaching. The first is that instructional emphasis should be placed upon the child's own immediate needs; and the second, that the personal nature of these needs implies that any remedial instruction which follows the identification of weaknesses must be personal. The philosophical foundation for the first statement appears to be sound. The results of numerous experiments in learning through drill and an understanding of the prevailing psychologies of learning combine to establish the soundness of the second statement (70, 71, 72, 147). Even though experimental evidence were completely lacking on the desirability of having the pupil work on his individual errors, implied evidence from other related fields of learning would be convincing.

**D. Drill distributions in practice exercises and workbooks do not close-**

**ly parallel those of current standardized language tests.**

Tests and drill exercises constructed in the last four years have not been checked, but previous to that time studies by Crawford (39) and by Bunch (25) indicated a serious lack of overlap in the drill emphasis of tests and drills. Supervisors attempting to utilize standard tests to evaluate a special drive on the language skills set forth in certain of the practice exercises and workbooks should not be too disappointed if the results are not encouraging. Too often the drill exercises emphasize one type of ability and outcome, while the tests just as definitely emphasize another (60). A possible solution of the difficulty may lie in the preparation of both drills and tests by individuals with the same general objectives and skills in mind.

**E. Short periods of intensive drill on a few usages are most effective.**

The literature of practically all fields of learning is full of experimental evidence supporting this conclusion (53, 145). Numerous studies of the value of drill concentrated on certain language usages offer convincing evidence (37, 134). Implied data from other tool skills are plentiful and equally convincing.

**F. Dictation exercises afford effective drill on matters of form, punctuation, and capitalization.**

The experimental evidence indicates a significant and lasting gain in pupil-control over these skills as a result of using the dictation method. Brueckner and Cutright (24) found highly favorable results in an experiment with fourth grade children. Carpenter (29) finds them most effective for remedial drills in both the junior and senior high school. Such exercises have the specific values of economy and ease of adaptation to meet individual pupil needs.

# Editorial

## A New Responsibility

TO TEACHERS, the radio is no longer a matter of indifference; it is a teaching responsibility. The duty of training pupils in a finer use of the radio often falls to the English teacher, for the radio is an influence for good or bad on the speech habits of children, and a force in shaping ideals of communication.

William S. Paley, President of the Columbia Broadcasting system, pointed out in his address before the Second National Conference on Radio Broadcasting, in Chicago (November 29), that broadcasting in the United States of America must function democratically. With this "freedom of the air" there has come into the schools a new problem—that of teaching when and how to listen, and when not to listen to the radio. "To the limit of public acceptance," declared Mr. Paley, "the broadcaster must be willing that the listener shall be exposed to all kinds of ideas on all kinds of subjects," and added, "So long as there is broadcasting some one is going to have to decide what should be broadcast and what should not. These decisions are always going to be made by fallible human beings."

Here, in a new guise, is the Undeclared Gate. What specifically can be done by the teacher becomes then a question of major importance. The teacher needs first of all to familiarize himself with some of the sources of information about radio and radio programs and broadcasting. There are committees on the radio in nearly all educational organizations and school systems, the National Education Association, The National Council of Teachers of English,

The United States Office of Education, whose activities and whose reports should be studied. The 1936 and 1937 proceedings of the First and Second National Conferences on Educational Broadcasting contain highly significant papers, for this source represents an organized effort to give the radio more distinctly educational functions throughout the United States. There are also the brochures, pamphlets, and leaflets published from time to time by the great broadcasting systems, and by radio manufacturers. Furthermore, there are many excellent books on various phases of the subject from the preparation of radio script to the art of broadcasting.

Next, of immediate concern are the schedules of radio broadcasts, local, national, and international. The teacher should know what is on the air, in order to utilize the subject matter of appropriate broadcasts. He may take occasion to bring noteworthy broadcasts to the attention of his pupils. The very fact that particular broadcasts are regarded as sufficiently important as to be worthy of classroom announcement will impress the children. Children need to be trained to tune in on superior broadcasts, and this training can be secured only by a wholehearted persistence on the part of the teacher.

No elaborate teaching is necessary. A simple and effective follow-up is to inquire, the following day, whether or not the children remembered to listen in on the program that had been brought to their attention. The opportunities for teaching will be richly rewarding to the alert English teacher.



# Index

## Volume XIV

### A

- ABBOTT, JACOB. Altstetter, M. F.—Jacob Abbott and Little Rollo, 61
- ADULT EDUCATION. Lowenberg, B.—Elementary English in the Evening School, 301
- Adventure in Reading.—F. C. Sayers, 203
- Agnew, Kate, and Boney, C. De W.—Periods of Awakening or Reading Readiness, 183
- Aldrich, Grace L.—A Library Catalogue Lesson, 209
- Along the Magic Highway—J. Cole, 215
- Altstetter, Mabel Flick—Jacob Abbott and Little Rollo, 61; Susan Warner and "The Wide, Wide World," 165
- American Youth and English—D. V. Smith, 28
- Among the Publishers, 69, 227, 273
- Anderson, Alton R.—En Route to Integration, 45
- Ashbaugh, E. J.—An Unsolved Problem in Spelling, 17

### B

- Barry, J. Richard—How I Gained the Garden of Literature, 64
- Baruch, Dorothy W.—Creative Language of Kindergarten Children, 288
- Betts, Emmett A.—Retardation in Reading, 141
- Bianco, Margery—Writing Books for Boys and Girls, 161
- Bibliography of Unpublished Studies in Elementary School English, 1934-1936—B. Goodykoontz, 250, 293
- Boney, C. De Witt, and Agnew, K.—Periods of Awakening or Reading Readiness, 183
- BOOK WEEK. Cole, J.—Along the Magic Highway, 215; Foster, F. E.—A Joke on the Imps: A Book Week Pantomime, 213
- Bradshaw, Ruth E.—Children's Choices in Poetry in the First Grade, 168
- Bryson, Lyman—The Textbook of the Future, 55

### C

- Case for Manuscript Writing—M. E. Howard, 177
- Certain Matters of Importance in the Teaching of Reading—P. McKee, 115
- Change for the Better—F. Nettleman, 265
- Chase, Sara E.—Descriptive Adjectives in Children's Vocabularies, 11
- Children's Choices in Poetry in the First Grade—R. E. Bradshaw, 168
- CHILDREN'S LITERATURE. Altstetter, M. F.—Jacob Abbott and Little Rollo, 61; Altstetter, M. F.—

Susan Warner and "The Wide, Wide World," 165; Barry, J. R.—How I Gained the Garden of Literature, 64; Bianco, M.—Writing Books for Boys and Girls, 161; Bradshaw, R. E.—Children's Choices in Poetry in the First Grade, 168; Cole, J.—Along the Magic Highway, 215; Moore, A. E.—Magazines for Children, 58; New Books for Children, 227, 273; Pence, H., and Sallee, E.—A Fourth Grade Book Journey, 206; Sayers, F. C.—Adventure in Reading, 203; Skinner, C. L.—Let Us Talk Together, 159; Zeligs, R.—What Sixth Grade Children Are Reading, 257

CLASSROOM PROJECTS AND METHODS. Aldrich, G. L.—A Library Catalogue Lesson, 209; Crumrine, J.—Historical Drama and the Intermediate Child, 66; De Vargas, D.—Teaching "Mexicans" an English Vocabulary (Shop Talk), 31; Foster, F. E.—A Joke on the Imps: A Book Week Pantomime, 213; Fristoe, D.—The Teaching of Language in the One-Room Country School, 35; Johnson, M. I.—The Radio in Teaching Fifth and Sixth Grade English, 25; Keck, V. A.—Lists as an Aid in Teaching English (Shop Talk), 72; Lowenberg, B.—Elementary English in the Evening School, 301; Lyons, M. F.—Teaching Good Usage in the Kindergarten, 96; Nettleman, F.—A Change for the Better, 265; Pence, H., and Sallee, E.—A Fourth Grade Book Journey, 206; Wiecking, A. M.—Experimenting with a Flexible Reading Program, 129; Woodall, N.—To a New Teacher of Grade Four, 101

Cole, John—Along the Magic Highway, 215

COMPOSITION. Fristoe, D.—The Teaching of Language in the One-Room Country School, 35; Gillett, N.—Correlated Curriculum in Composition and the Social Studies, 80; Greene, H. A.—Principles of Method in Elementary English Composition, 103, 189, 219, 267, 304; Storm, G. E.—Social Studies: a Basis for English, 42

COMPOSITION, CREATIVE. Baruch, D. W.—Creative Language of Kindergarten Children, 288; Goldsmith, S.—The 3-B's Write Fairy Tales, 284

Correlated Curriculum in Composition and the Social Studies—N. Gillett, 80

CORRELATION OF ENGLISH WITH OTHER STUDIES. Anderson, A. R.—En Route to Integration, 45; Cotner, E.—English in the Integrated Pro-

- gram, 52; Gillett, N.—Correlated Curriculum in Composition and the Social Studies, 80; Storm, G. E.—Social Studies: A Basis for English, 42; Zyve, C.—English, an Integral Part of All School Activities, 49
- Cotner, Edna—English in the Integrated Program, 52
- Crane, William D.—The Fetish of English Grammar, 87
- Creative Language of Kindergarten Children—D. W. Baruch, 288
- Crumrine, Jeannette—Historical Drama and the Intermediate Child, 66

## D

- Dawson, Mildred A.—Recent Language Textbooks: A Study of Six Sixth-Grade Texts, 89
- De Vargas, Diego—Teaching "Mexicans" an English Vocabulary (Shop Talk), 31
- Descriptive Adjectives in Children's Vocabularies—S. E. Chase, 11
- Dolch, E. W.—Side Lights on a Combined Word List, 22

## E

- Editorials, 30, 68, 110, 153, 194, 232, 275, 310
- Elementary English in the Evening Schools—B. Lowenberg, 301
- En Route to Integration—A. R. Anderson, 45
- English, An Integral Part of All School Activities—C. Zyve, 49
- English in the Integrated Program—E. Cotner, 52
- Experimenting with a Flexible Reading Program—A. M. Wiecking, 129

## F

- Fetish of English Grammar—W. D. Crane, 87
- Fitzgerald, James A.—Psychology in the Reading Clinic, 133
- Foster, F. Marie—The Young Reader and his Teacher, 246
- Foster, Florence E.—A Joke on the Imps: A Book Week Pantomime, 213
- Fourth Grade Book Journey—H. Pence and E. Sallee, 206
- Fristoe, Dewey—The Teaching of Language in the One-Room Country School, 35

## G

- Garnett, Wilma Leslie—The Status and Improvement of Student Teachers in Reading, 147
- Gates, Arthur I.—Recent Experimental Attacks Upon Certain Spelling Problems, 6
- Gillett, Norma—A Correlated Curriculum in Composition and the Social Studies, 80
- Goldsmith, Sadie—The 3-B's Write Fairy Tales, 284

- Goodykoontz, Bess—A Bibliography of Unpublished Studies in Elementary School English, 1934-1936, 250, 293
- GRAMMAR. Crane, W. D.—The Fetish of English Grammar, 87; Lowenberg, B.—Elementary English in the Evening School, 301
- Great Adventure—R. Schoonover, 279
- Greene, Harry A.—Principles of Method in Elementary English Composition, 103, 189, 219, 267, 304

## H

- HANDWRITING. Howard, M. E.—The Case for Manuscript Writing, 177
- Historical Drama and the Intermediate Child—J. Crumrine, 66
- Horn, Ernest—The Incidental Teaching of Spelling, 3
- How I Gained the Garden of Literature—J. R. Barry, 64
- Howard, Margarette E.—The Case for Manuscript writing, 177
- Hughes, Marie M. and Tireman, L. S.—A Reading Program for Spanish-Speaking Pupils, 138

## I

- Incidental Teaching of Spelling—E. Horn, 3
- Integration. See CORRELATION.

## J

- Johnson, M. Irene—The Radio in Teaching Fifth and Sixth Grade English, 25
- Johnson, Roy Ivan—The State of the Language Reconsidered, 77
- Joke on the Imps: A Book Week Pantomime—F. E. Foster, 213

## K

- Keck, Virginia A.—Lists as an Aid in Teaching English (Shop Talk), 72

## L

- Language. See COMPOSITION
- Léonard, J. Paul—A Correlated Curriculum (Review), 71
- Let Us Talk Together—C. L. Skinner, 159
- Library Catalogue Lesson—G. L. Aldrich, 209
- Lists as an Aid in Teaching English—V. A. Keck (Shop Talk), 72
- Logan, Conrad T.—Noah Webster's Influence on American Spelling, 18
- Lowenberg, Benjamin—Elementary English in the Evening School, 301
- Lyons, Mary Frances—Teaching Good Usage in the Kindergarten, 96

## M

- McKee, Paul—Certain Matters of Importance in the Teaching of Reading, 115; Word Lists and Vocabulary Difficulty in Reading Matter, 241  
Magazines for Children—A. E. Moore, 58  
Meighen, Mary, and Pratt, M.—What Beginning Readers Read, 125  
Miller, William A.—The Picture Crutch in Reading, 263  
Moore, Annie E.—Magazines for Children, 58

## N

- NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON RESEARCH IN ENGLISH.  
Goodykoontz, B.—A Bibliography of Unpublished Studies in Elementary School English, 1934-1936 (Committee Report), 250, 293;  
Greene, H. A.—Principles of Method in Elementary English Composition (5th Annual Research Bulletin), 103, 189, 219, 267, 304  
NATIONAL COUNCIL OF TEACHERS OF ENGLISH.  
Smith, D. V.—American Youth and English (Excerpt from President's Address, 1936), 28  
Nettleman, Flora—A Change for the Better, 265  
New Books for Children, 227, 273  
Noah Webster's Influence on American Spelling—C. T. Logan, 18  
Nolte, Karl F.—Simplification of Vocabulary and Comprehension in Reading, 119

## P

- Pence, Helen, and Sallee, E.—A Fourth Grade Book Journey, 206  
Periods of Awakening or Reading Readiness—C. De W. Boney and K. Agnew, 183  
Picture Crutch in Reading—W. A. Miller, 263  
Pratt, Marjorie and Meighen, M.—What Beginning Readers Read, 125  
Principles of Method in Elementary English Composition—H. A. Greene, 103, 189, 219, 267, 304  
Psychology in the Reading Clinic—J. A. Fitzgerald, 133

## R

- Radio in Teaching Fifth and Sixth Grade English—M. I. Johnson, 25  
READING. Betts, E. A.—Retardation in Reading, 141; Boney, C. De W. and Agnew, K.—Periods of Awakening or Reading Readiness, 183; Fitzgerald, J. A.—Psychology in the Reading Clinic, 133; Foster, F. M.—The Young Reader and His Teacher, 246; Garnett, W. L.—The Status and Improvement of Student Teachers in Reading, 147; McKee, P.—Certain Matters of Importance in the Teaching of Reading, 115; McKee, P.—Word Lists and Vocabulary Difficulty in Reading Matter, 241; Miller, W.

A.—The Picture Crutch in Reading, 263; Nolte, K. F.—Simplification of Vocabulary and Comprehension in Reading, 119; Pratt, M. and Meighen, M.—What Beginning Readers Read, 125; Sayers, F. C.—Adventure in Reading, 203; Stullken, E. H.—Retardation in Reading and the Problem Boy in School, 179; Tireman, L. S. and Hughes, M. M.—A Reading Program for Spanish-Speaking Pupils, 138; Wiecking, A. M.—Experimenting with a Flexible Reading Program, 129

- READING INTERESTS. Bradshaw, R. E.—Children's Choices in Poetry in the First Grade, 168; Schoonover, R.—The Great Adventure, 279  
Recent Experimental Attacks Upon Certain Spelling Problems—A. I. Gates, 6  
Recent Language Textbooks: A Study of Six Sixth-Grade Texts—M. A. Dawson, 89  
RESEARCH STUDIES. Goodykoontz, B.—Bibliography of Unpublished Studies in Elementary School English, 1934-1936, 250, 293; Dawson, M. A.—A Study of Six Sixth-Grade Texts, 89; Greene, H. A.—Principles of Method in Elementary English Composition, 103, 189, 219, 267, 304  
Retardation in Reading—E. A. Betts, 141  
Retardation in Reading and the Problem Boy in School—E. H. Stullken, 179  
Reviews and Abstracts, 32, 71, 154

## S

- Sallee, Esther, and Pence, H.—A Fourth Grade Book Journey, 206  
Sayers, Frances Clarke—Adventure in Reading, 203  
Schoonover, Ruth—The Great Adventure, 279  
Shop Talk, 31, 72, 233, 276  
Side Lights on a Combined Word List—E. W. Dolch, 22  
Skinner, Constance Lindsay—Let Us Talk Together, 159  
Smith, Dora V.—American Youth and English, 28  
Social Studies: A Basis for English—G. E. Storm, 42  
SPELLING. Ashbaugh, E. J.—An Unsolved Problem in Spelling, 17; Gates, A. I.—Recent Experimental Attacks upon Certain Spelling Problems, 6; Horn, E.—The Incidental Teaching of Spelling, 3; Logan, C. T.—Noah Webster's Influence on American Spelling, 18  
State of the Language Reconsidered—R. I. Johnson, 77  
Status and Improvement of Student Teachers in Reading—W. L. Garnett, 147  
Storm, Grace E.—Social Studies: A Basis for English, 42  
Stullken, Edw. H.—Retardation in Reading and the Problem Boy in School, 179

## T

- Teaching Good Usage in the Kindergarten—M. F. Lyons, 96
- Teaching "Mexicans" an English Vocabulary—D. De Vargas (Shop Talk), 31
- Teaching of Language in the One-Room Country School—D. Fristoe, 35
- Textbook of the Future—L. Bryson, 55
- TEXTBOOKS. Bryson, L.—Textbook of the Future, 55; Dawson, M. A.—Recent Language Textbooks: A Study of Six Sixth-Grade Texts, 89
- Three-B's Write Fairy Tales—S. Goldsmith, 284
- Tierman, L. S. and Hughes, M. M.—A Reading Program for Spanish-Speaking Pupils, 138
- To a New Teacher of Grade Four—N. Woodall, 101

## U

- Unsolved Problem in Spelling—E. J. Ashbaugh, 17
- USAGE. Johnson, R. I.—The State of the Language Reconsidered, 77

## V

- VOCABULARY. Chase, S. E.—Descriptive Adjectives in Children's Vocabularies, 11; De Vargas, D.—Teaching "Mexicans" an English Vocabulary (Shop Talk), 31; Dolch, E. W.—Side Lights on a Combined Word List, 22; McKee, P.—Word Lists and Vocabulary Difficulty in Reading Matter, 241; Nolte, K. F.—Simplifica-

tion of Vocabulary and Comprehension in Reading, 119

## W

- WARNER, SUSAN. Altstetter, M. F.—Susan Warner and "The Wide, Wide World," 165
- WEBSTER, NOAH. Logan, C. T.—Noah Webster's Influence on American Spelling, 18
- What Beginning Readers Read—M. Pratt and M. Meighen, 125
- What Sixth Grade Children are Reading—R. Zeligs, 257
- Wiecking, Anna M.—Experimenting with a Flexible Reading Program, 129
- Woodall, Nora—To a New Teacher of Grade Four, 101
- Word Lists and Vocabulary Difficulty in Reading Matter—P. McKee, 241
- Writing Books for Boys and Girls—M. Bianco, 161

## Y

- Young Reader and his Teacher—F. M. Foster, 246

## Z

- Zeligs, Rose—What Sixth Grade Children Are Reading, 257
- Zyve, Claire—English, an Integral Part of All School Activities, 49



